



SEPTEMBER 2024 FEATURED MEMBER

## SANDY BORNSTEIN



Sandy is a Colorado Based, Author, Journalist, Editor, and Photographer. With more than 50 countries under her belt and a few NATJA Awards, she specializes in Active Adventure (Skiing, Hiking, Biking, Horseback Riding, etc), Cruises, Family/Intergenerational, Food/Beverage/Wine, Health/Wellness, History, Jewish Culture, Luxury Boomer Travel, Grieving & Traveling, & Solo Travel.

You can read one of her books, "100 Things to Do in Boulder Before You Die" and "May This Be the Best Year of Your Life", a resource for people contemplating an ex-pat lifestyle and living outside their comfort zone.

### 1. What got you into travel writing?

After living as an expat in Bangalore, India in 2010, I decided to write a book about what I had learned while living abroad. While I was marketing *May This be the Best Year of Your Life*, my husband (Ira) and I started to travel more. Ira had suffered a traumatic brain injury right before I started my position as an international teacher. Since our future together was uncertain, we decided to spend more time exploring the world. It took awhile to figure out what steps I should take to become a successful travel writer. Ira was an accomplished lawyer licensed in three

states and I was an educator. He took some of my digital images and was my editor. In 2020, he was diagnosed with glioblastoma (terminal brain cancer) and passed away in July 2023. My last book, *100 Things to Do in Boulder Before You Die*, is dedicated to him.

**2. What's the most challenging part of being a travel journalist for you?**

I had a unique situation since I had to be mindful of my husband's medical issues. I placed a priority on where Ira wanted to visit and which destinations would be the wisest places to go with his underlying issues. As I make the transition from couples travel to solo travel, I have to be more aware of my comfort zone, especially as a recent widow. Even though most grieving widows feel safest at home and rarely travel during the first year or two, I traveled 4 times and skied 35 times. Traveling and skiing helped me through the first year of the grieving process. Going forward, I will need to find media outlets or travel entities that are looking for my new genres.

**3. What's your most unusual and/or memorable travel experience?**

Our pre-Covid trip to the Galapagos Islands and Machu Picchu stands out as one of my favorite trips. The wildlife and diverse ecosystems were amazing. Machu Picchu, Cusco, the Sacred Valley, and the Belmond Hiram Bingham train were magical experiences.

**4. How did you learn about NATJA and why did you join?**

When I attended my first Travel Classics conference in Tucson, Arizona, I learned about NATJA from some of the writers who were at the event. They encouraged me to check out the organization and to consider joining.

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